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A.—(a) There are six doctors (including four honoraries), four nurses, five nursing orderlies and four totis in the Medical wards and eight doctors (including five honoraries), six nurses, seven nursing orderlies and four totis in the Surgical wards.

(b) & (c) There are 53 beds in the Medical wards and 109 beds in the Surgical wards. Patients admitted over and above those numbers are provided with mat-beds on the floor.

Appointment of Schools Assistants.

388 Q.—Sri M. NARAYANA KURUP: Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(a) how many persons were appointed as School-Assistants in the year 1954–55 (i) by direct recruitment and (ii) by promotion; and

(b) how many persons acting as School-Assistants were reverted during the same period?

A.—(a) (i) Number of persons appointed as School-Assistants by direct recruitment—Nil.

(ii) Number of persons so appointed by promotion—6.

(b) 3.

[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

III.—PUBLICATION IN THE PARLIAMENT OF A REPORT SENT TO THE UNION GOVERNMENT BY THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE, MADRAS STATE.

Sri M. KALYANASUNDARAM :—" Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the last session, while answering a question put by the hon. Member Sri Narayana Kurup on the 5th March or so, if I remember aright, the Hon. the Finance Minister said that the Report sent to the Union Government by the Inspector-General of Police, Madras State, could not be placed on the table of House. Some Members on this side pointed out that that Report had been circulated among the Members of the Lok Sabha and they wanted a ruling from the Chair. The ruling was not given then. May I request you, Sir, to give the ruling? "

Mr. SPEAKER :—" Before giving my ruling, I want to know what the Hon. Minister wants to say on this matter. Let not Members think that I am led by the Minister. If so, I shall straightaway give my ruling."

Sri M. KALYANASUNDARAM :—" We have no objection if the Hon. Minister wants to say anything."

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MR. SPEAKER :—" Then, let me hear the Hon. Minister."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" It is no doubt true that a portion of the Report sent to the Central Government has been made available to the Members of the Lok Sabha but not the entire Report. That is why I am taking objection to laying on the table of the House the entire Report and I claim privilege."

* SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" Now, the question resolves itself into this. It is whether the Report sent by this Government was revealed to the Members of Parliament. It seems to be admitted and if it is a fact, we are entitled to know its contents. Now, the plea advanced is that only a portion of the Report has been circulated and it is asked whether that amounts to publication to the Members of Parliament. Without referring to that portion which has been circulated and the Report, how can we say whether it is only a portion of the Report that has been circulated? I wish to know whether the Hon. Minister has verified the information with reference to the portion circulated and the Report sent."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" I have verified and the Report contains many more things which it will not be in the public interest to disclose at this stage."

MR. SPEAKER :—" Whether it is a part of the Report or the full Report that has been circulated, as far as the Chair is concerned, what is it that the Chair can do in the matter? A Minister can say that in the public interest he will not reveal certain matters. How can the Chair force the Minister to answer a question? Is it laid down in any rule or in any Parliamentary procedure that the Chair has power to force a Minister to answer?"

* SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" The point which the Chair has to decide is this. Privilege can be claimed by the Hon. Ministers only if it is a confidential document and has not been revealed to other people. Otherwise, it will be a breach of privilege of the House. Therefore, the question is not so simple . . ."

MR. SPEAKER :—" A Minister can refuse to answer a question in the public interest. As far as the Chair is concerned, it cannot interfere in this matter. If the hon. Member is dissatisfied with the position, there is a weapon in his hands. I have told the House a number of times that the hon. Member can censure the Government, if he thinks that the Government have revealed certain matters to others and not here."

SRI S. SWAYAMPRAKASAM :—" When the Minister says that it is a confidential matter and that in the public interest it cannot be revealed, the Chair cannot force the Minister to disclose it. The point now raised is this. A portion of the Report has been published in the Lok Sabha. What is the objection that the

Government take to disclose it here? The Chair can point out whether there is any reason behind the Government's refusal to disclose it."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The hon. Member has not fully understood the functions of the Chair. The Chair cannot interfere in this matter. The Chair cannot cross-examine the Minister. It cannot call on the Minister to find out whether the matter is of a confidential nature or not. It is for the Minister to defend that thing. The Minister can say whether it is a confidential matter or not. If the House thinks that it is not a confidential matter, it can censure the Government. That is the only weapon it has got."

* SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" What we wish to hear from the Chair is whether there has been a publication of the document. You may be pleased to give the ruling that only a portion of the Report was published, that there was no publication of the entire Report as such and that, therefore, this House is not entitled to have it. That is what we expect to hear from the Chair."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The Hon. Minister has told the House that only a portion has been revealed."

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Sir, whether it was published in any other form or not, the point at issue is this. If the Minister refused to place on the table of the House any document on the ground that it is confidential, can the Hon. Speaker force the Minister to do it? On this point, the Hon. Speaker has given his ruling. If the hon. Member has got any grievance, there are other methods available to him." 12-10 p.m.

SRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN :—" Sir, on a point of information . . ."

MR. SPEAKER :—" Is it on this subject? "

SRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN :—" Yes, Sir."

MR. SPEAKER :—" Then, I am sorry I cannot allow the hon. Member to speak as the matter is closed now."

IV.—PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

MR. SPEAKER :—" Under rule 14 (1) of the Madras Assembly Rules, I nominate the following hon. Members to the Panel of Chairmen :—

Sri Y. Manjaya Shetty,
,, K. C. Gopalan Unni,
,, D. Dasarathan, and
,, K. Uppi."